

News Release

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Livermore Lab Workers Are Long-Lived

Lab Mortality Rate Lower Than General Population

LIVERMORE, Calif. ? Mortality rates for employees at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory continue to be significantly lower than the death rates for the general population, an ongoing study shows.

The study revealed that, for all causes of death during the period 1984 through 1996, Lab workers died at less than half the rate of the U.S. population.

This is a further improvement in mortality rates than was recorded in an earlier study that examined Lab workers for the period 1969 through 1980. That study found workers died at less than three-quarters the rate of the U.S. population.

The latest study was conducted by Mortimer Mendelsohn, MD, Ph.D., and Dan Moore, Ph.D., members of the Lab's Biology and Biotechnology Research Program.

In the latest study, the sharpest declines in mortality rates were for cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease. Those for cancer were less dramatically reduced.

One potential driver for these results may be the low smoking rates for the Laboratory population. In the same period covered by the recent study, California smoking rates were roughly 70 percent of the rest of the country, and the corresponding cardiovascular disease rates for

California was 87 percent of the U.S. Since smoking was discontinued in all Lab buildings during the period of the second study, it is possible that smoking rates at the Laboratory ? and the resulting cardiovascular disease ? have dropped even more than those of the state.

Other factors that may be operating are lifestyle issues such as diet, exercise and enjoyment of work.

The data show no indication of any occupational illness at the Lab, said Mendelsohn.

"Whatever the reasons for this remarkable longevity of the Lab population, we can rejoice in the results," Mendelsohn said. Founded in 1952, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is a national security laboratory, with a mission to ensure national security and apply science and technology to the important issues of our time. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is managed by the University of California for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

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